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Objectives We investigated whether the personality factors measured in individuals with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) symptoms differ from healthy participants, taking into account the subgroups of IBS (IBS-diarrhea, IBS-constipation, IBS-mixed and IBS-undetermined).

Methods A cross-sectional survey of 4763 participants was carried out in Isfahan University of medical sciences. They were asked to fill two questionnaires: A validated questionnaire which fulfilled Rome III criteria for IBS considering their sociodemographic and lifestyle data as well, and the NEO-FFI questionnaire. Data was processed and analyzed using SPSS, Student's t-test for quantitative variables and Chi-squared statistic test for qualitative variables. Prevalence of each IBS subgroups was also assessed according to predominant stool pattern.

Results There were significant differences between IBS and non-IBS group in all dimension except openness ($p < 0.01$). The mean score of neuroticism was significantly lower in non-IBS group but they showed a significantly higher level of extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness. Mean score of all dimensions was reported to be higher in female patients except extraversion ($p < 0.01$).

Conclusions The results indicate that the personality dimensions in irritable bowel syndrome differ from non-IBS group.

Keywords: Irritable bowel syndrome; Personality; trait; subtype